THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) The possibility of mixing of naphtha with petrol by some unscrupulous elements cannot be ruled out owing to substantial price differential between petrol and naphtha and the miscibility of naphtha with petrol.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Government have issued the Naphtha (Acquisition, Sales, Storage and Prevention of Use in Automobile) Order, 2000 under the essential Commodities Act, 1955 to prevent diversion and misuse of naphtha for adulteration. State Governments have been empowered under this Order to take action in the case of malpractices/irregularities. In cases of adulteration, Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) take penal action against their dealers under the Marketing Discipline Guidelines (MDG).

Gas pipeline network

1281. SHRI TARINI KANTA ROY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to develop gas pipeline network notifying GAIL as the nodal agency; and

(b) if so, the time-frame thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Government is formulating a Natural Gas Pipeline Policy which inter alia envisages the early development, in a competitive environment, of a nationwide gas grid, with the participation of both the public and private sectors.

Indo-Pakistan oil exploration project

1282. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have explored oil in the Rajasthan desert;

(b) whether it is a project being undertaken by India and Pakistan; and

(c) if so, the details about the plan of the project and procedure?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Yes, Sir, oil discoveries have been made in block RJ-ON-90/1 by M/s Cairn Energy Pty. Ltd. in the State of Rajasthan. Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (ONGC), Oil India Ltd. (OIL) and private/ joint venture companies are at present carrying out hydrocarbon exploration in the State of Rajasthan.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Question does not arise.

Rise in natural gas price

1283. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have raised the natural gas price by 12 per cent for fertilizers and 26 per cent for power units;

(b) if so, the details about the price; and

(c) whether it has an impact upon the small and marginal farmers?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Non-revision of petroleum prices

†1284. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the companies working under the private sector have to suffer losses as a result of not increasing the prices of petrol and diesel suitably;

(b) if so, the details thereof, company-wise;

(c) whether the petroleum companies have been permitted to increase the prices of petrol and diesel every fortnightly in the domestic market upto 10 per cent; and

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.